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A Soviet Defector Is Granted Permission to Stay in Britain

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LONDON, Oct. 25 (AP) — Oleg Bitov, who was the foreign editor of a Soviet literary publication and defected at the Venice International Film Festival last month, has been granted permission to stay in Britain, the Home Office said today.

The Daily Telegraph said Mr. Bitov, 51 years old, was "smuggled" into England from Italy. The paper quoted unnamed Government officials as saying he "has turned out to be the most significant defector to Britain for a year."

The newspaper added, "It is thought that he was in a position to know the

names of K.G.B. agents working abroad."

It said Mr. Bitov was foreign editor of the Literaturnaya Gazeta and called that weekly publication "a favorite vehicle for attacks on foreign journalists, Soviet dissidents and Western intelligence organizations and clearly has a direct link to the K.G.B." The K.G.B. is the Soviet intelligence and internal-security agency.

Press Association, Britain's domestic news agency, said it was believed that Mr. Bitov was undergoing questioning at a house near London.

A Home Office press officer said Home Secretary Leon Brittan had agreed to accept Mr. Bitov's request to remain in Britain on a long-term basis.

The Daily Telegraph said officials were comparing Mr. Bitov's defection to that of Vladimir Kuzichkin, a diplomat at the Soviet Embassy in Teheran who fled to the West a year ago. It said Mr. Kuzichkin provided Western intelligence organizations with the names of K.G.B. agents operating in Europe and with much other information.